

AINA CASE STUDY

TOURISM AND BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT

River Great Ouse: new mooring sites



The Great Ouse Boating Association helps manage moorings in association with riparian landowners

The availability of moorings generally sets a limit on the boating capacity of a waterway and crowding at a small number of sites can create a poor quality experience for visitors. However, where authorities are unable to provide additional moorings, a well-organised local boaters' group can play an important role in helping to negotiate new facilities with local riparian owners.

In The Broads, the Great Ouse Boating Association (GOBA), with more than 3,000 members, has played a key role in finding and renting stretches of riverbank for use by its members. GOBA members have exclusive right to use a network of 'wild' moorings on the River Great Ouse and its tributary rivers, and low membership fees encourage a high uptake amongst the region's boating community. GOBA currently rents 20 mooring sites to augment those provided by the Environment Agency and local authorities. Most of these function as wild grassy banks where mooring facilities are not provided.

In order to overcome the worries of landowners, particularly the farming community which can fear damage to crops and livestock, GOBA arranges visitor-only moorings with a 48 hour limit. A strict code of conduct insists that members must always leave sites as they found them, and rental agreements range between £100 to £500 per annum.

GOBA is responsible for on-site safety, and maintenance is carried out where access for equipment is available with grass cutting taking place six times each year. Close working with ENCAMS (Keep Britain Tidy) also helps to plan volunteer work days. Arrangements, and shared funding, with anglers also helps to encourage more fishing from the riverbanks.

GOBA feels that their provision of simple moorings sets a positive and cost effective example to others, and has encouraged the Environment Agency to adopt similar schemes on their land holdings.